JFK Assassination System Date: 8/31/201
Identification Form

Agency Information

AGENCY : ROCKCOM
RECORD NUMBER : 178-10004-10396

RECORD SERIES : BAKER-WEIDNER FILES

AGENCY FILE NUMBER : B-W VII-K

Document Information

ORIGINATOR : ROCK
FROM : WEIDNER, JOHN
TO : FILE

TITLE : INTERVIEW WITH JOHN STEIN

DATE : 03/18/1975
PAGES : 8

SUBJECTS :
CIA
NOSENKO, YURI
STEIN, JOHN
SECRET SERVICE
OSWALD, LEE, RUSSIAN PERIOD

DOCUMENT TYPE : PAPER, TEXTUAL DOCUMENT
CLASSIFICATION : Secret
RESTRICTIONS : 1B; 1C
CURRENT STATUS : Redact
DATE OF LAST REVIEW : 02/13/2001

OPENING CRITERIA :

COMMENTS : Includes "Advice and Waiver" statement.

COMMISSION ON CIA ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE UNITED STATES
Washington, DC 20500

March 18, 1975

SECRET - SENSITIVE

178-10004-10396

MEMORANDUM FOR: File

FROM: James B. Weidner

SUBJECT: Interview with John Stein

I interviewed Mr. Stein in his office at the CIA Headquarters, Langley, Virginia on March 18, 1975. The interview commenced at 11:10 a.m. and continued until approximately 1:20 p.m. No one else was present. At the outset of the interview, Mr. Stein signed an Advice and Waiver which is annexed hereto.

Mr. Stein, along with several other Deputies, were assigned to an Ad Hoc Committee to review various alleged domestic activities of the CIA. Stein's particular area was the counter-intelligence staff, except for the activities of that staff relating to the CI/SO project and to the mail intercept project.

Stein said that, after his review, he concluded that the job of the CI staff was essentially to "horse" the FBI into doing something. In fact, according to Stein, once you eliminate CI/SO and the mail intercept project from the CI staff, their activities were benign insofar as the scope of this Commission's scope of inquiry was concerned. He said that, unless you conclude that keeping records relating to Americans, per se, is improper, the CI staff files contained little of interest.

(a) Action-oriented Matters

I asked Stein whether he had found any evidence of domestic breaking and entering directed by the CI staff. Stein said that he had found no such activities, with one possible exception. Stein stated that, if such activities seemed appropriate, the CI staff would inform the Bureau

which would accomplish the activities. This was because, if anything were discovered by virtue of the action which would lead to a prosecution, the action should be taken by the FBI, since the Department of Justice would have responsibility for the prosecution.

The only possible exception to the absence of any "breaking and entering" by the CI staff was the Tofti case. Tofti was a long term employee of the Agency, who put his house up for rent. Coincidently, another Agency employee went to look at the house for possible rental. In the course of so doing, the second employee found that there were quite a number of classified documents on the third floor of the house. The employee then reported what he found to the Agency, which sent personnel over to recover the documents. (The documents related to world-wide proprietaries of the Agency with which Tofti had been involved. Ultimately, Tofti explained that he intended to write a book about these matters and that was why the records were in his home.) The Agency undoubtedly did not have time to advise the Bureau much in advance (if at all) of the Agency's effort to recover the subject documents. Stein also noted that this incident did not, in fact, involve "breaking and entering" since the house was already opened to allow prospective renters to examine it.

Stein said that he had found no instances of physical surveillance done by the CI staff, although the staff would probably have been aware of surveillance accomplished by other agency components or by the Bureau. Stein cited as an example an instance where a female Agency employee was found to be living with a man who could well have been working for a foreign Government. The Office of Security, therefore, put a surveillance on her hous for approximately three weeks. Discussions were also had with an informant within the Agency concerning this employee. (Files on this case would be maintained by the Office of Security).

Stein found no evidence of any electronic surveillance or telephone taps accomplished domestically by the CI staff. The staff had no personnel who could actually take any action. The staff, in this regard, would have had an advisory capacity, if it participated at all. The CI staff would simply advise the Bureau or other components of the Agency such as the Office of Security or the Office of Technical Services. In such instances the CI staff would not hold the file, except perhaps a memorandum relating to the particular case, but Stein found no such memoranda.

As a digression, Stein commented that, to the extent that CI staff may have gotten into "gray" areas, this may well have been as a result of an effort to restrict knowledge of a particular incident to the smallest possible number of people. Thus, rather than going to the Bureau, where control over the dissimilation of the subject information would not be possible, the staff might go to another Agency component such as the Office of Security. Similarly, where an investigation proved fruitless, continued maintenance of relevant files by the CI staff, rather than by the Agency or the Bureau generally, constituted part of an effort to avoid prejudicing the particular subject of the investigation.

Another general area mentioned by Stein was that involving the use by CI staff of people having an historical relationship with the staff. These persons would be used against clearly foreign targets in the United States. As an example, Stein said that such persons might be used to obtain access to codes or the like in this country.

Stein mentioned the allegations relating to the reported breaking and entering into the Chilian Embassy. I told him that we had already reviewed this instance, and, therefore, there was no need for him to review it any detail.

(b) Files on Americans.

The major source of files on Americans maintained by CI staff was the "American Targets Program" (ATP). This program involved information received by CI staff from Agency sources, from the State Department, and from the Military. Information might also be received from the FBI. The purpose of ATP was to collate all contacts between any American and any foreign intelligence officers, particularly those from the USSR. The concept of the program was that all such contacts would be reported to CI staff, which would index them for future reference.

Stein noted that, although the State Department actually had a formal regulation requiring that all contacts with Soviets be reported, it was extremely difficult to convince State officers so to report. Stein spent a substantial amount of time overseas under State cover. He said that, as a result of that experience, he knows that State officers are reluctant to report this kind of information. (A State officer probably will not achieve promotion by his contact with Soviet personnel.) As a result of this reluctance, the information obtained by the CI staff generally originated with the State Department's Office of Security.

The ATP program for filing was simply that when a name was reported to CI staff, it was mechanically processed by personnel who exercised no judgment in recording the name. The names of both the Soviet and the American people involved in the contact would be recorded. As a result of this process, the ATP file index was able to develop a great deal of information on Soviet contacts with Americans. If, as a result of information obtained, CI staff had reason to believe that a aprticular person had been recruited by the Soviets, that information would be forwarded to the Office of Security for the Agency, if any Agency officer were involved, or to FBI, if an American outside the Agency was involved.

Stein explained that this program was conducted by CI staff instead of by the FBI or State, because the program might well contain information which would be relevant to CIA purposes, but not relevant to the purposes of the other Agencies. Thus, the files might well contain information concerning known KGB Agents. That information, in turn could have derived from a sensitive source, the identity of which CIA would not want to have revealed. Accordingly, the information was stored by the Agency rather than the other possible Governmental components. Information relevant to those components, however, was made available to them from the ATP project.

The information utilized by ATP could have been derived,as noted, from reports of other Governmental components or from information provided by any American. This would be information provided voluntarily, either by a person actually having a contact with a foreign intelligence officer or by persons with knowledge that someone else had had such a contact. The information could be particularly useful, not only to the CIA, but to other Governmental components. For example, the State Department's Office of Security might report that a State officer had had a contact over a long period with a Soviet. The CI staff could check all its information on that Soviet and confirm whether they had reason to believe that the Soviet was in fact an agent.

Another source of files on Americans held by CI staff might be the product of code-breaking by NSA. Thus, in reading codes, names of Americans may appear. Some of these may be innocuous, and some may be spies. In any event, all these names are also indexed, although the index is separate from ATP, because of the sensitivity of the NSA program as well as the information derived therefrom.

The information plugged into the indexing system will not become an actual file until there is some reason for opening a file on a particular person. At that point (for example, a file search requested by another Agency) all information relating to a particular person will be collated in one place. This, in turn will be developed into a separate file (a personality file). If the information on a particular person is requested by a CIA field office, the collation process would occur and the field would be told how the particular person had come to the attention of the Agency in the first instance and would also be told any derogatory information which the field station would want to know.

Other CI files derived from on-going cases. Part of these files emanate from information provided to the Agency by defectors. For example, one element of this information is designated "Soviet leads." [This is because the CI staff learned from a defector that all Soviet women employed in the United States Embassy in the USSR during a certain period were Soviet agents. Some of these women, in turn, married Americans, and, as a result, now live in the United States. The FBI is advised of the identity of all these women. The CI staff, under official cover, occasionally goes out to interview these women, in an effort to convince them to reveal what they know about KGB operations. The effort was first to determine whether the women continue to be KGB agents, and, if not, to gather information from them. The general modus operandi would be to tell the women that we know that at one time they were KGB agents and, while we did not intend to take any action against them, to request them to reveal information that they may have learned at that time concerning KGB operations. Generally, the women would agree to do so. If they did not, the contract would, at least temporarily, be dropped. These women are, in short, used as "defectors who did not defect".]

Other examples of going cases are: [a journalist] who had private contact with George Blake, a former KGB agent in England; an American who was tied into the Able case (in this instance, the actions are taken by the Bureau, but guidance is given by CI staff); and a journalist who the KGB, on three occasions, attempted unsuccessfully to recruit.*

Other files may relate to actions begun because of some kind of counterintelligence implication in a particular situation. In these instances CI would maintain the files because of the particular sensitivity of the matter, even though action may be taken by another Agency component.

---

*Stein noted that the decision as to whether to utilize someone as a double agent is made by the CIA. If the decision is affirmative, the double agent would be handled by t Agency (if he is abroad) or by the FBI (if he is in this country). The only exceptions to this pattern would be where the double Agent is in the United States for only a brief tim or where he has a special relationship with a particular CIA officer.

Other files are maintained concerning the Soviet Embassy. CIA's position on this matter is that this is a State case which the Agency is running on behalf of State.

There is also a file on Vesco held by the CI Staff. The Agency became involved in this situation because John Dean of the White House called and stated that President Nixon's brother had obtained a job with IOS. He wanted to know what IOS was all about. CIA, in fact, had a file on IOS, because it was known that the Soviets had been attempting to penetrate that institution as a vehicle for getting agents into this country or at least allowing them to learn of economic matters relating to the United States. Stein said that, at one point, Vesco's lawyer called to say that he wanted to have an account of everything which had been said about Vesco over South American radio channels. The Agency refused this request, stating that it was beyond its charter.

(c) Defectors

There are four sorts of defectors handled by the CI Staff. The first group are those under low level cover which are being used to scan Soviet publications and to extract anything relating to Soviet intelligence which they, in light of their expertise, may recognize. The second group of defectors are those with "talents". This group are former KGB agents who, as a result, have special knowledge. They may be used from time to time to go and talk with (either in the United States or abroad) USSR citizens. Another sort of defector is one from Czechoslovakia. This particular person is highly knowledgable in Maxist-Leninist matters. Accordingly, he is used to write propaganda which is disseminated abroad. The last category of defectors are those who are no longer in regular contact with the agent. These particular persons are seen from time to time for some particular reason which could simply be an administrative matter concerning their pensions, etc.

The . CI Staff also maintains a file on defectors from America to some other country (such as the Soviet Union, Cuba and others). These names are recorded because the persons involved may eventually end up in the United States once again or in some country other than the Soviet Bloc. This would not necessarily mean that that person is a spy, but it does mean that he would be of counter-intelligence interest. At approximately the time of the Kennedy assassination the Secret Service and the FBI became particularly interested in potential defectors from

the United States. (Recall that Oswald had had connections with Russia). This was an operation which the CIA did not particularly want to undertake. Nonetheless the Agency did trace the names which the Bureau and Secret Service provided in this regard. The number of these names was perhaps 2,000 including crackpots who may have as an off hand comment, suggested that they intended to defect to, for example, Russia. The CIA attempted to turn the program over to the Secret Service for the Bureau, but th would not take it. The CIA ultimately stopped the project and cleared all the files out. This would have been approximately three years ago. Stein noted that although the files had been eliminated, it was possible that some of the names provided to the Agency had made it into the Central Agency files, and would not have been eliminated therefrom.

I briefly discussed the NOSENKO Case with Stein. Nosenko had defected to the United States and was admitted to this country as a "parolee". That is, the Immigration and Naturalization Bureau have a quota of persons which the Agency can bring into the country without regular immigration papers. These persons are the responsibility of the Agency. There was some initial doubt, as to whether, in fact, Nosenko had been sent to the United States by the KGB. Information obtained from another defector tended to confirm this suspicion. The question then was what to do with Nosenko. It was decided for a variety of reasons, that it would be unwise to attempt to deport him; as a result, he was kept in the United States in isolation. After several years it was determined that Nosenko was, in fact, not an attempted double agent. He was thereafter rehabilitated and now lives happily in the United States. Although the CI had an interest in this case, it was actually run by the Office of Security.

As one aspect of the Agency's duty to help in services of common concern to all Governmental agencies, the CIA recorded in computer form at the request of the FAA, all information relating to hijackers. Stein thinks that this was probably because the CIA had the only equipment which could handle the needed material in the proper fashion. The information so provided would, for example, include names of all those who were on board hijacked planes. Approximately two years ago the CIA tried to give this program to the FAA. That Agency, however, would not accept the program, and, therefore it was terminated by CIA.

ADVICE AND WAIVER

Place Langley Va

Date ~~[illegible]~~ 3/18/74

Time 11:10 Am

Before you make any statement to, or answer any questions from, the Commission or its investigators, you should understand that you have the right to remain silent. If you choose to answer, anything you say can be used against you in court.

You may consult a lawyer for advice before any questions are put, and you may have a lawyer with you during questioning. If you cannot afford a lawyer, one will be appointed for you before questioning if you wish. If you decide to answer questions without a lawyer present, you still have the right to stop answering at any time; or you may defer your answer until you talk to a lawyer.

WAIVER

I have read and understand the foregoing advice. I am willing to make a statement and answer questions /~~with~~/ /without/ a lawyer at this time. No promises or threats have been made to me, and no pressure or coercion of any kind has been used against me.

Signed [signature]

Witness: [signature]

Witness: ______

Witness: ______